

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-03

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MANAMA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 020671

FOL REPEAT OF JIDDA 0452 TO USIA INFO SECSTATE USDOC ABU DHABI
KUWAIT JAN 21

QTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 0452

USIAC

E.O.: 11652: GDS

TAGS: SCUL

SUBJ: DIRECTOR GEN. SAUDI TV VOICES EXTREME DISPLEASURE
WITH MPEAA (FILM DISTRIBUTORS U.S. FILMS ABROAD)
PRICING POLICY

REF : USIA 0311; JIDDA 0451 (NOTAL)

1. DURING COURSE DISCUSSION ON DESIRABILITY SADLIK VISIT,
TV DIRECTOR GENERAL SHUBAILY DISGRESSED TO SUBJECT MPEAA FILM
DISTRIBUTION IN ARAB WORLD. SHUBAILY CLAIMED MPEAA USED TO
CHARGE FROM \$110.00 TO
\$200.00 PER FILM HOUR. FOLLOWING OCT-
OBER WAR AND SUBSEQUENT INCREASE IN OIL PRICES SHUBAILY
SAID MPEAA UNILATERALLY RAISED PER HOUR COST TO \$200.00
\$500.00 RANGE.

2. SHUBAILY CONVINCED INCREASE DIRECTLY RELATED TO INCREASED
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OIL PRICES AND PURELY POLITICAL IN ITS MOTIVATION. HE CLAIMS

TO HAVE SUPPORTIVE DOCUMENTATION TO THIS EFFECT. HE CONTINUED SAUDI GOVERNMENT VIEWS THIS AS FLAGRANT CHALLENGE AND IS NOW ON VERGE RECOMMENDING THAT SAUDI ARABIA, KUWAIT, ABU DHABI, BAHRAIN, QATAR AND MUSCAT IMPOSE A TOTAL BOYCOTT ON ALL U.S. FILMS DISTRIBUTED BY MPEAA. HE NOTED THAT OVER PAST SIX MONTHS HE HAS REDUCED INTAKE MPEAA FILMS FROM 17 TO 10 PER MONTH.

3. HE SAID HIS VIEWS REFLECTED THOSE OF THE OTHER GULF STATES NOTED IN PRECEDING PARAGRAPH AND THAT QUITE POSSIBLY AT CONFERENCE GULF STATES TV DIRECTORS HE WOULD BE ATTENDING FEB. 6-12, A VOTE TO IMPOSE TOTAL BOYCOTT MAY BE TAKEN. SUCH A MOVE HE SAID WOULD HAVE "GRAVE IMPLICATIONS FOR USIA AND STATE DEPARTMENT," AND THAT U.S. GOVERNMENT SHOULD APPROACH MPEAA TO DISSUADE THEM FROM CONTINUING PURSUE THEIR PRESENT PRICING POLICY. HIS IMPLICATION SEEMED TO SUGGEST THAT BY NOT PERSUADING MPEAA OF THEIR FOLLY, WE, THE USG, WERE IN EFFECT, CONDONING WHAT HE ALLEGES TO BE THE POLITICAL MOTIVATION BEHIND THE INCREASE.

4. SHUBAILY CALCULATED THAT TOTAL LOSS OF REVENUES TO MPEAA FROM SAUDI ARABIA ALONE WOULD BE \$125,000.00 HE ADDED THAT BY UNANIMOUSLY VOTING FOR BOYCOTT DURING THEIR FEBRUARY CONFERENCE GULF STATES AND SAUDI ARABIA WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY INFLUENCE OTHER ARAB AND ISLAMIC COUNTRIES TO DETRIMENT OF MPEAA.

5. DIRECTOR GENERAL REQUESTED THAT HIS VIEWS BE PASSED ON TO APPROPRIATE U.S. GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS "BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE."

ACTION: AGENCY COORDINATE APPROACH TO MPEAA WITH STATE AND COMMERCE AND COME BACK WITH GUIDANCE FOR PAO WHO TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED MEET WITH SHUBAILY IN RIYADH JAN. 26 IN CONNECTION WITH TIME "NEWSTOUR". RUGGIERO UNQTE KISSINGER

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